

Article Alert

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The books, articles, and web sites described in the Article Alert present a diversity of views in order to keep our IRC users abreast of current issues and concerns in the United States. These items represent the views and opinions of the authors and do not necessarily reflect official U.S. Government policy.

New E-Journal

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Media Emerging



An Electronic Journal of
the U.S. Department of State
March 2006

Innovation in information technologies has thrust the world into an era of democratic media in which people have access to news and information unbound from traditional barriers of time and geography. Innovation gives rise to new media formats with new models for information distribution,

consumption, and use. Traditional lines between the audience and media institutions are crossed as citizens gain access to platforms from which to express their own ideas and opinions, circumventing media corporations and governments, the long-standing gatekeepers of information.

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- The \$100 Laptop
- Bloggers Breaking Ground in Communication
- Photo Story - Online Albums
- Making Connections a World Away
- Internet2—Creating Tomorrow's Internet

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U.S. Life and Culture

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America Savors Its Music During Jazz Appreciation Month



Each April, the United States celebrates Jazz Appreciation Month (JAM), an opportunity to savor a major American contribution to world culture. Initiated by the Smithsonian Institution's National Museum of American History, JAM aims to focus public attention on the music, and on the many talented composers, musicians and other contributors to the sound.

For the enthusiast who wishes to learn more about jazz, the following brief summary prepared by John Edward Hasse, the Smithsonian's curator of American Music, offers a useful starting point. For more information about Jazz Appreciation Month, see USINFO's interactive dialogues on the subject and the Smithsonian Institution Web site (<http://www.smithsonianjazz.org/>).

- The New York Jazz Scene
- Jazz Appreciation Month, from the Smithsonian
- Jazz Masters, from the National Endowment for the Arts
- Jazz at Lincoln Center
- Institute of Jazz at Rutgers University
- Jazz: A Film by Ken Burns
- KidsClick!

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DEMOCRACY AND HUMAN RIGHTS

1. Adesnik, David; McFaul, Michael. "Engaging Autocratic Allies to Promote Democracy." *Washington Quarterly*, vol. 29, no. 2, Spring 2006, pp. 7-26.

The U.S. should improve its efforts to promote democracy abroad, especially under regime-change conditions and in autocratic allies such as Egypt, Saudi Arabia, Morocco, Algeria and Pakistan, through diplomatic engagement, according to authors Adesnik and McFaul. NGOs lack the ability to confront regimes directly, but the U.S. government can challenge autocratic regimes through what Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice has called transformational diplomacy. U.S. diplomats often underestimate their leverage, allowing their preference for stability to blind them to a regime's vulnerabilities, write Adesnik and McFaul. Using close ties with a regime to exert pressure can influence the course of political liberalization. The authors look closely at Cold War democratic breakthroughs in the Philippines, South Korea and Chile, and suggest that U.S. officials should engage autocratic allies while pushing for evolutionary change as a preemptive strategy to avoid revolutionary change.

2. Shogun, Colleen J. "The Contemporary Presidency: The Sixth-Year Curse." *Presidential Studies Quarterly*, vol. 36, no. 1, March 2006, pp. 89-101.

Shogun, a university government and politics professor, describes the scandals, economic depressions, and weakened political coalitions that have plagued sixth-year presidents since Ulysses S. Grant. Shogun describes the serious scandals and problems that dogged Presidents Clinton, Reagan, and Nixon and the less calamitous events of the Roosevelt and Eisenhower years. The article includes graphs depicting downturns in numbers of the congressional representatives from the sixth-year president's party during the mid-term elections.

3. Tessler, Joelle. "Privacy Erosion: A 'Net Loss'." *CQ Weekly*, vol. 64, no. 8, February 20, 2006, pp. 480-485.

According to Tessler, Congress has fallen behind in applying privacy laws to the ever-evolving Internet technology. This results in government's ability to tap private information from e-mail storage, Internet search engine logs, and online wiretapping. Since most targeted individuals are not aware that they are being tracked, there haven't been many court cases to shed stronger light on the situation. Although a number of lawmakers in Congress recognize this as a problem, "it doesn't attract a lot of attention or excitement," notes Sen. John Sununu (R-NH). However, with more high-profile cases, like Google resisting subpoenas, stronger focus would be set on privacy protection.

ECONOMIC SECURITY AND TRADE

4. Johnston, E. Barry; Nedelescu, Oana. "The Impact of Terrorism on Financial Markets." *Journal of Financial Crime*, vol. 13, no. 1, 2006, pp. 7-25.

The authors, both with the International Monetary Fund, analyze lessons for effective policy and regulatory responses to protect financial systems in the face of terrorist attacks, using the events in New York on Sept. 11, 2001, and in Madrid on March 11, 2004, as examples. In the subsequent regulatory responses to protect the financial systems from abuse by terrorists, the authors found diversified, liquid, and sound financial markets that were quite efficient in absorbing the shocks of these terrorist attacks. They noted well-organized crisis management responses were key to the market's ability to continue to function in an effective way. At the international level, a coordinated effort was made to bolster the global payments system, strengthen confidence, and shore up financial markets. Monetary authority from major economies such as Canada, the Euro area, Japan, Switzerland, and the United Kingdom, directly injected large amounts of liquidity and made immediate interest rate cuts in response to the Federal Reserve's actions. Within a short period of time after the New York attacks, a majority of countries stepped up the fight against terrorism in an effort to maintain peace and security and to fight terrorism financing.

INTERNATIONAL EARTH DAY APRIL 22, 2006

EARTH DAY.gov



GLOBAL ISSUES

5. Kluger, Jeffrey, et al. "Be Worried. Be Very Worried. Earth at the Tipping Point." *Time*, April 3, 2006, pp. 28// 62.

In this cover-story special series of articles on global warming and climate change, TIME writers and photographers paint the most alarming picture to date of the changes taking place around the world. The authors note that "the debate is over -- global warming is upon us with a vengeance", writing that climatic disruptions are now feeding off one another; scientists, who have been warning about this for decades, now fear that we may have reached a point of no return. The authors explain how the planet has tipped into this crisis so quickly, and what can and is being done to mitigate the effects of global climate change.

6. Rotman, David. "The Foundation of Health." *Technology Review*, vol. 1089, no. 1, March/April 2006, pg. 72-75.

Antiaging researchers aren't likely to find ways to extend life anytime soon. But their work could provide a powerful approach to treating the many diseases of old age. There is evidence, for example, that calorie restriction -- which extends the lifespans of rodents -- affects the molecular and genetic events that govern aging and the diseases of aging. And researchers are already using insights gained from studies of aging and the effects of calorie restriction to search for new drugs to treat such diseases as cardiovascular disease, Alzheimer's, type 2 diabetes, and cancer, all of which rise exponentially with age. Some biologists are working to develop a drug that mimics the molecular effects of calorie restriction -- a regime that's too demanding for many people to follow. At least two companies -- Elixir Pharmaceuticals and Sirtris, both in Massachusetts -- have been founded to discover drugs for age-related diseases using core technologies built around antiaging genes.

(Available online at <http://www.technologyreview.com>.)

7. Wasik, Bill. "My Crowd, or Phase 5: A Report From The Inventor of The Flash Mob." *Harper's*, March 2, 2006, pp. 56-66.

A flash mob is defined as "a public gathering of complete strangers, organized via the Internet or mobile phone, which performs a pointless act and then disperses again." In fact, as reported by the author, who claims to have created the first flash mob in New York City in June 2003, the flash mob can be variously a daring media experiment, an exercise in performance art, and a marketing opportunity co-opted by major corporations. Wasik describes the logistics of organizing a flash mob event, how it evolved from an obscure prank limited to a few of the author's friends into a phenomenon that migrated to other cities throughout the United States, and the breathless coverage that flash mobs generated on blogs and mainstream newspapers. Although lighthearted in tone, the article raises interesting questions about the surprising uses of communications technologies and the impact of their social effects.

INTERNATIONAL SECURITY

8. Boyer, Allen Lee. "U.S. Foreign Policy In Central Asia: Risk, Ends, Means." *Naval War College Review*, vol. 59, no. 1, Winter 2006, pp. 91-117.

Small and scattered populations, geographic remoteness and a failure to provide a certain level of political security are sources of weakness for the five states in the heart of Central Asia -- Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Turkmenistan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan. These factors make them candidates for state failure and conflict, which will cause an increase in criminal activity, corruption, poverty, civil strife, radicalism, economic stagnation and environmental destruction. Commander Boyer argues that the United States needs to prevent these nations from failing, because of human rights, their strategic location and their energy resources. The frontiers of these states bordering China, Russia, Iran and Afghanistan are very porous, enabling easy transit by terrorists, criminal organizations and contraband. The U.S. is limited in its ability to effect change in the region due to geopolitics, the nature of the local regimes, and a lack of leverage, notes the author, so it must seek a multilateral approach with the help of non-state actors to promote a unified regional cooperative strategy for all of Central Asia. This strategy should seek unity among all actors and promotion of economic prosperity, regional cooperation, civil society and good governance. Boyer believes that these principles can be accomplished by focusing on two goals: ensuring that Central Asian states do not fail and improving their ability to deliver political goods to their citizens.

9. Boix, Carles. "The Roots of Democracy." *Policy Review*, No. 135, February/March 2006, pp. 3-21

A political science professor at the University of Chicago, Boix contends that democracies succeed in countries where income inequality is low, and where elites' wealth is mobile. Where income inequality is high and wealth is tied to mineral resources and/or agriculture, elites have too much to lose by elections, and so will rule via authoritarian means. Boix also posits two types of transitions to democracy: the first is the long, slow route of economic development; the second, political violence from outside, as in Germany, Italy and Japan after World War II.

US SOCIETY AND VALUE

10. Dvorak, John. "San Francisco Then and Now." *American Heritage*, vol. 57, no. 2, April/May 2006, pp. 55-60

This year marks the 100th anniversary of the 1906 earthquake in San Francisco. The article describes how the city recovered from one of the greatest natural disasters to strike the U.S., and the potential earthquake threats that lie ahead. The author, who studied earthquakes for 16 years at the U.S. Geological Survey, continues to monitor potential and real-time quakes. San Francisco is his favorite city and he gives a wonderful written "tour" of the architectural survivors.



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☐ New E-Journal, March 2006 "Media Emerging"

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